

Northwest Georgia Environmental Corridors

An environmental corridor is defined as an area of concentrated environmental value. An environmental corridor may take several forms, but tend to be associated with linear land and water patterns.

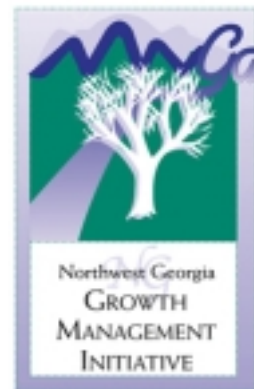
Environmental Corridors can be land or water based.

- Land based corridors. Such as, major ridges, mountain ranges or other geological features like fault lines. These features most often occur with other key features of value such as upland forests, wildlife habitats, erodible soils and steep slopes.
- Water based corridors. Such as a river basin or tidal marsh. These features are often linked with swamp or hardwood forests, prime wildlife habitats, and alluvial soils.

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources has identified twenty-six environmental corridors in the State of Georgia. Six of these are contained in whole or in part within the northwest Georgia area. A significant portion of the northwest Georgia area's most scenic rivers, diverse wildlife habitat, striking mountain vistas, and culturally valuable sites can be found within these corridors.

The six environmental corridors in the northwest Georgia area are:

- The Blue Ridge Corridor is located in the Appalachian Mountains region of North Georgia from the Cohutta Mountains area in the west to the Tallulah River Basin area in the east. The corridor includes large areas of Chattahoochee National Forest lands; the Blue Ridge Mountains; headwaters of the Conasauga, Coosawattee, Etowah, Chestatee, Chattahoochee, Tallulah, Nottely, Hiawassee, and Toccoa Rivers; the Blue Ridge Crest and high mountains region of Appalachian North Georgia (with the exception of the Chattooga watershed which is a separate corridor); ten wildlife management areas; six state parks; and hundreds of identified natural areas such as rare flora and fauna locales, waterfalls, hemlock, ravines, mountain top meadows (the Bald Mountains), river shoals and outcrops, caves, springs, scenic and wild rivers, and creeks.
- The Conasauga Corridor is located along the Conasauga River in northwest Georgia from the Tennessee/Georgia line to just outside of Nickleville, Georgia. The corridor includes the Conasauga River, the immediate greenbelt of near-natural vegetation along the river, some primitive agricultural areas, and several sections of woodland that penetrate to the river.
- The Etowah / Chestatee Corridor is located along the Etowah and Chestatee Rivers in North Central Georgia from the headwaters of the Chestatee River along Tesnatee Creek to the backwaters of Lake Allatoona on the Etowah River. The corridor includes the Etowah and Chestatee Rivers; several tributary creek watersheds; one state park; a wildlife management area; numerous falls, ravines, rare plant locales, and natural areas; and large amounts of upland Piedmont and Appalachian foothills landscapes.
- The Lookout / Pigeon Mountain Corridor is located in the northwestern corner of Georgia along the Sand Mountain, Lookout Mountain, and Pigeon Mountain plateaus and valleys as they pass through Georgia from Tennessee to Alabama. The corridor includes the plateau areas, steep slopes along the plateaus, some valley landscapes, a wealth of natural features, a wildlife management Area, one existing state park, many creeks and creek canyons, and a large amount of forest.
- The Ridge and Valley Corridor is located along Taylor Ridge/Johns Mountain area of NorthWest Georgia from the Tennessee/Georgia border to Alabama. The corridor includes Taylor Ridge, Dick Ridge, White Oak Mountain, Rocky Face Mountain, Horn Mountain, Little Sand Mountain, Simms Mountain, Rocky Mountain, Gaylor Ridge, Kincaid Mountain, Heath Mountain, Turnip Mountain, Judy Mountain, sections of the lower valleys and creek canyons around these mountains and ridges, Chattahoochee National Forest lands, two wildlife management areas, and a variety of special features.



Northwest Georgia Environmental Corridors (cont.)

- The Talladega/Great Smokies Fault Corridor is located along the Talladega, Cartersville, and Great Smokies Faults in North central to NorthWest Georgia from Route 5 near Jasper, Georgia to the Alabama/Georgia border. The corridor includes a series of mountains and forested upper Piedmont ridges to the east of the fault zone; a wildlife management Area; two state parks; large areas of mountain and Piedmont forests; several natural areas; the Tallapoosa River; many small creek watersheds; and many special features such as caves, waterfalls, springs, and shoals.

Because much of the area encompassed within the corridors has been rural and undeveloped, these environmental corridors have retained a measure of environmental integrity and pristine character. In addition, much of the Ridge and Valley Corridor and Blue Ridge Corridor are contained in the Chattahoochee National Forest and thus are spared from development activity. However, the demands of expanding urban development throughout all of northwest Georgia could threaten the unique environmental characteristics of the corridors. Because the corridors cross jurisdictional lines, a regional or statewide approach for corridor management and preservation is necessary if they are to be protected. While the total preservation of all of the corridors may not be feasible, there does exist the significant opportunity for inter-jurisdictional cooperation for the management and preservation of the highest priority corridors for the use and enjoyment of the public. An excellent example of inter-jurisdictional efforts to preserve the environmental integrity of an unique corridor is the Conasauga River Alliance.

More information about the environmental corridors in northwest Georgia
can be found in the Joint Regional

